

**AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' ERRORS IN USING POSSESSIVE  
ADJECTIVES IN THEIR WRITING TASKS  
(A CASE STUDY AT THE TENTH GRADE OF A VOCATIONAL  
SCHOOL IN SINGAPARNA, TASIKMALAYA)**

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**Abstract:** This study is purposed to analyze 1) the kinds of possessive adjective errors which are mostly made by students in their writing tasks; and 2) the causes of possessive adjective errors which are mostly made by students in their writing tasks. A case study is used as a research design which engaged the students at the tenth grade of a vocational school in Singaparna, Tasikmalaya. By means of purposeful sampling technique, 17 students at class X-TKR 1 are selected as the participants of this study. This study uses two instruments namely, the students' worksheet on writing test and the semi-structured interview. The result shows that 'his' and 'her' were the kinds of possessive adjective errors which are mostly made by students in their writing tasks. The results also presented that the students make errors in using and in writing possessive adjectives because they are not aware of possessive adjectives, their grammar is still poor which lead to boredom, unmotivated, and uninterested in learning. The strategies or ways applied by the students are effective to overcome their errors in using and in writing possessive adjectives in their writing tasks so that they are able to identify their errors and difficulties, to correct their errors, and to be focus in learning grammar, especially in learning possessive adjectives

**Keywords:** errors; possessive adjectives; writing tasks

## INTRODUCTION

Writing is a key in communication knowledge and expressing ideas which is productive and expressive activity. Behroozizad (2015, p. 112) claimed that "writing skill means a vital guide for learning. It is a tool of conveying information and communicating the opinions and feelings." Moreover, Spratt, Pulverness, and Williams (2005, p. 26) stated that "writing engages communicating a message (something to say) by putting marks on a page". Manchón (2011) states that writing is a similar, exploratory, and generative process whereby writers find and reconstruct their ideas as they try to estimate its meaning

Writing is not easy to write because writing should be able to produce something new and can give ideas to the readers. The students at senior high school often face some difficulties in learning and mastering writing skill. They still have a great barrier in learning English writing due to the fact that they do not know what to write; and most school and college students are still very poor in grammar (Asif, 2013, p. 39; Choo & Kwon, 2017, p. 26). Meanwhile, there are many patterns or structures in English grammar, in particular, possessive adjectives as a focus of this research. According to Eastwood (2002, p. 19) possessive adjective is the possessive forms before a noun in the determiner position.

In addition, it is found that students encountered difficulties in writing because they cannot distinguish the usage of 'possessive adjectives. Another reason is that the structures of Bahasa Indonesia and English language are not similar. As in a study conducted by Suryani (2018, p. 367) who has found out that most of the second-year students of SMPN 7 Teluk Kuantan faces difficulties in identifying and using possessive adjectives. Apart from lack of students' external and internal motivation as well as lack of students' parent attention, there is no special time to teach grammar/ structure anymore. In short, the students were frequently confused of how to use the possessive adjectives, the possessive pronouns, and not able to complete their grammar tasks as a result of many errors

In learning English, making mistakes or errors is common particularly in written form because of the language habit in mother tongue is very different from English; so, it can give affect for the content of their writing. The messages from their writing unsuccessfully convey to the reader. Brown (2007, p. 258) defines that "errors' peculiarities in the language of a learner that are direct appearances of a system within which a learner is practicing at the time". It means that errors are probably constructed to occur repeatedly and not identified by the students. It relates to the failure to use the system correctly due to the lack of the students' competence.

Recently, the issue on students' errors in using possessive adjectives is rarely investigated by foreign researcher. However, it has been widely discussed in Indonesian education context (Suryani, 2018; Ataman & Çetinkaya, 2017; Heryanti, Sucipto, & Sucipto, 2017)

The common thing between the previous study and the present study is in term of analyzing the students' errors in possessive adjectives. The differences are in the research focus, the data collection, and the educational level. The previous study focused on students' ability in identifying possessive adjectives and possessive pronouns in sentences, investigating English learners' use of pronouns and possessive adjectives in speaking in an EFL context, and examining the interlanguage syntax of high school students of English. Besides, they used one instrument (a multiple-choice test, students' oral exam records, and the questionnaire). The present study used a case study which focused on the kinds and the causes of possessive adjective errors mostly made by students in their writing tasks using data inquiry of writing test and the interview The research takes place in a vocational school in Singaparna, Tasikmalaya. Based on the aforementioned background, the following research questions are elaborated:

1. What kinds of possessive adjective errors are mostly made by students in their writing tasks?
2. What causes of possessive adjective errors are mostly made by students in their writing tasks?

## **METHOD**

This research took place at the tenth grade of a Vocational school in Singaparna, Tasikmalaya. A case study was used in this study because the writer did not try to modify the phenomenon by means of sources of evidence, instead, it highlight on a program, event, or activities and provide a specific explanation and interpretation of a case derived from extensive data collection (Creswell, 2012, p. 481). A purposeful sampling technique was selected as the sample based on the decision. Thus, the writer chose the 17 students at this class because they faced more errors in using possessive adjectives in their writing tasks than other classes.

The students' worksheet on writing test and the interview were selected as research instruments. In the classroom, the test was distributed and collected by the English teacher, while

the results were analyzed by the writer. In working the test, they had to write down a short and simple good text on the worksheet provided by the teacher. After finishing their assignment, they had to collect it to their teacher. After that, the writer conducted the interviews to the students. The writer selected 6 students to be interviewed as the representative of all participants. The students were interviewed individually and they were allowed to express more about their perspectives, attitudes, opinions, and what they thought or how they felt about the topic being research.

In analyzing the students' worksheet on writing test, the writer used the procedural analysis steps to conduct an error analysis research which were adapted from McCharty (1993), as quoted by Suryani and Hidayatullah (2018, p. 70). The writer transcribed the data from the recording interview. After that, the transcription of the recording interview was analyzed by using conversational analysis.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After the data collection taken from the students' worksheet on writing test and the interview finished, the analysis of each instrument was conducted and described as follows:

### *The kinds of possessive adjective errors which are mostly made by students in their writing tasks*

The first research question was aimed to identify the kinds of possessive adjective errors which are mostly done by students in their writing assignments. The results of the students' worksheet on writing test passed through triangulation process over the interview on the first and the second questions. The frequencies and percentages of possessive adjective's errors are given in Table 1.

Table 1 Frequencies and percentages of possessive adjective's errors

No.	Possessive Adjective	f	%	Addition	%	Misformation	%
1.	my	7	12.3	3	5.3	4	7.0
2.	his	12	21.1	3	5.3	9	15.8
3.	her	12	21.1	1	1.8	11	19.3
4.	its	9	15.8	0	0.0	9	15.8
5.	our	6	10.5	0	0.0	6	10.5
6.	their	11	19.3	1	1.8	10	17.5
<b>Total</b>		<b>57</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>86%</b>

As can be seen in Table 1, the results of the students' writing test have been proceeded by triangulation over the interview on the first and the second questions to answer the first research question. The findings revealed that the students still encountered difficulties in learning possessive adjectives in their writing tasks. Relevant to this findings, a study conducted by Suryani (2018, p. 367) showed that most students faced difficulties in identifying and using possessive adjectives. Accordingly, the students made errors in using and in writing possessive adjectives in their writing tasks.

Furthermore, there were 6 kinds of possessive adjectives errors which were performed by the students, including 'my', 'his', 'her', 'its', 'our', and 'their'. In this case, errors in writing such as 'his' and 'her' (21.1%) were the kinds of possessive adjective errors which are mostly made by students in their writing tasks. However, errors in writing such as 'my' (12.3%), 'its' (15.8%), 'our' (10.5%), and 'their' (19.3%) were the kinds of possessive adjective errors which are rarely made by students in their writing tasks. In contrast, no error in writing possessive adjective of 'your' (singular and plural) which was made by students in their writing tasks. The writer concluded that the biggest difficulties faced by the students in writing possessive adjectives were errors in writing possessive adjectives of 'his' and 'her'.

The findings of this study strengthened the ones from the study carried out by Suryani (2018) which revealed that the second year students found it difficult to identify possessive adjectives and

possessive pronouns. The students considered writing possessive adjectives are difficult. In line with this finding, the finding of this study also revealed that the students at the tenth grade in a vocational school in Singaparna, Tasikmalaya still encounter difficulties in learning writing possessive adjectives in their writing tasks. In the context of foreign research, the findings of this study also enriched and supported the findings of the study conducted by Ataman and Çetinkaya (2017) which found that ELT students got confused about choosing the correct one between “I” and “my”. In line with this finding, the finding of this study also found that there were 6 kinds of possessive adjectives errors which were performed by the students, including ‘my’, ‘his’, ‘her’, ‘its’, ‘our’, and ‘their’.

### ***The causes of possessive adjective errors which are mostly made by students in their writing tasks***

The second research question was purposed to analyze the causes of possessive adjective errors which were mostly made by students in their writing tasks. The interview result from the third question were proceeded into triangulation over the fourth and the fifth one to answer the second research question.

The interview from the third question have been proceeded using triangulation blended with the interview on the fourth and the fifth one to answer the second research question. The findings revealed that the students made errors in using and in writing possessive adjectives in their writing tasks because of some reasons. Firstly, they did not understand about the roles of English grammar and structures, especially possessive adjectives. Secondly, they viewed that they still had weak grammar mastery which made them boring, unmotivated, and uninterested in learning it. Thirdly, they were confused when they use possessive adjectives because it was different between Bahasa Indonesia and English. In line with this, a study carried out by Heryanti, et al. (2017, p. 90) showed that the difference form of possessive case in Bahasa Indonesia and English lted in students errors in using possessive adjective.

Furthermore, some strategies or ways were applied by the students to overcome their errors in using and in writing possessive adjectives in their writing tasks. Firstly, they tried to understand and to recognize the structures of possessive adjectives. Secondly, they asked and communicated to the other students or to their English teacher about possessive adjectives. Thirdly, they tried to advance their interest and motivation in learning and mastering grammar, particularly possessive adjectives. Similarly, Choo and Kwon (2017, p. 26) stated that the students were often discouraged in learning grammar as they considered it as very difficult and boring.

Overall, some strategies or ways which were applied by the students were effective to overcome their errors in using and in writing possessive adjectives in their writing tasks. The first reason is that they were able to identify their errors and difficulties in writing possessive adjectives. Secondly, they were able to correct their errors in writing possessive adjectives. Thirdly, they were able to be focus in learning grammar, especially in learning possessive adjectives.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

After analyzing the data, it was concluded that there are two important points as findings of the present study. In this case, the students at the tenth grade of a vocational school in Singaparna, Tasikmalaya still encounter difficulties in learning possessive adjectives in their writing tasks because of some reasons: 1) they did not understand about the roles of English grammar and structures, especially possessive adjectives; 2) they viewed that they still had weak grammar mastery which made them boring, unmotivated, and uninterested in learning it; and 3) they were confused when they use possessive adjectives because it was different between Bahasa Indonesia and English. The strategies or ways applied by the students are greatly effective which results in students’ ability in identifying their errors and difficulties, correcting their errors, and being focus in learning grammar, especially in learning possessive adjectives.

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